

Texas Rookery Management

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What is a Rookery?

**Group of birds in trees,
typically near water.**

**Occupants range from a few
breeding pairs to thousands.**

**Adults and offspring return
to same location every year.**

Rookery Site

- **Closed canopy (>75%)**
- **Overlapping branches from tree to tree**
- **Nest-site trees**
 - **20-30 feet tall**
 - **3-9 inches in diameter (DBH)**
- **Nesting Season – March to October**
- **Life-span of rookery 1-12 years, avg 5yrs**



Cattle Egret



Great Egret



Snowy Egret

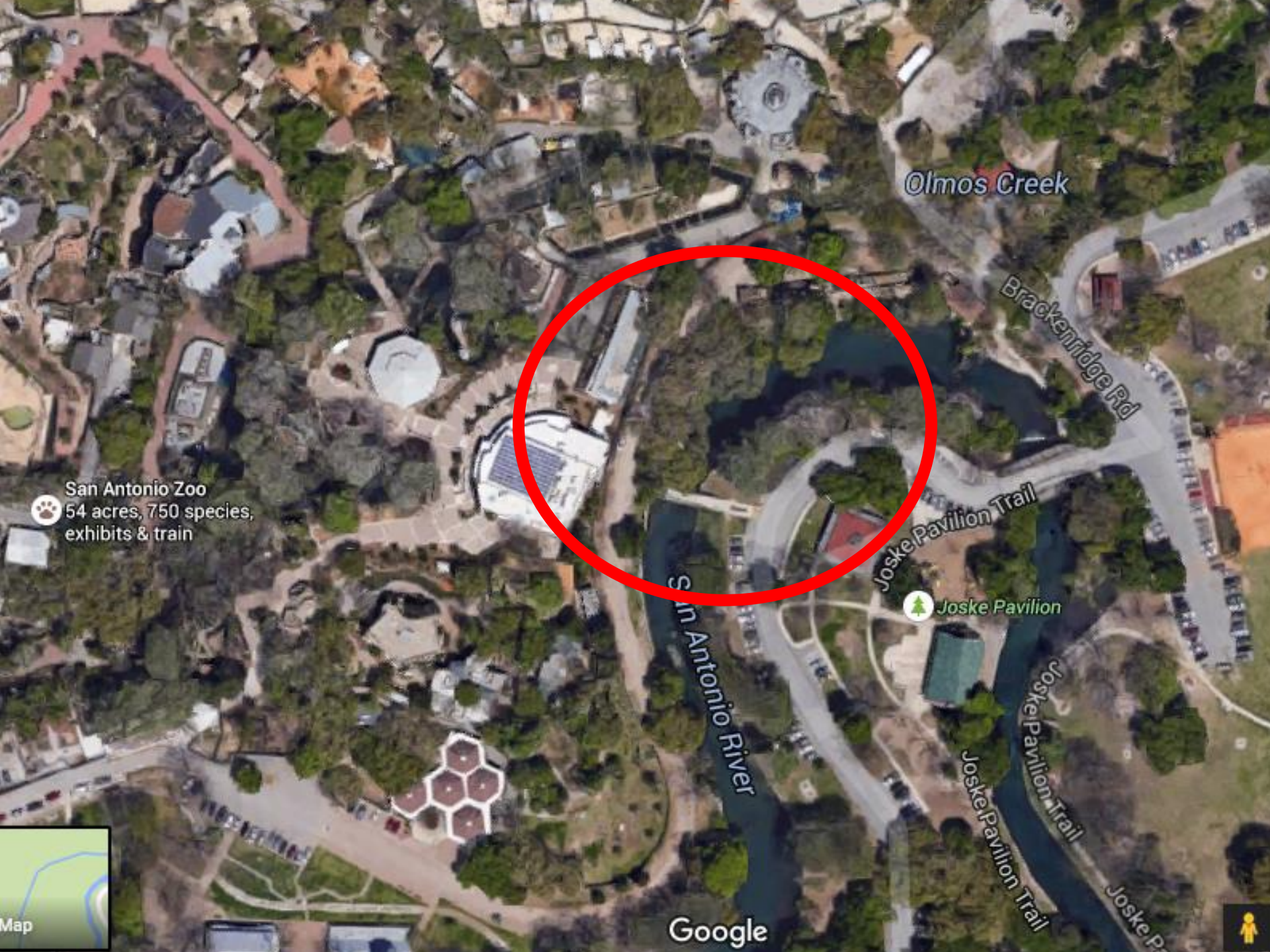
Little Blue Heron



Yellow-crowned Night Heron



Black-crowned Night Heron




Olmos Creek

Brackenridge Rd

 San Antonio Zoo
54 acres, 750 species,
exhibits & train

Joske Pavilion Trail

 Joske Pavilion

San Antonio River

Joske Pavilion Trail

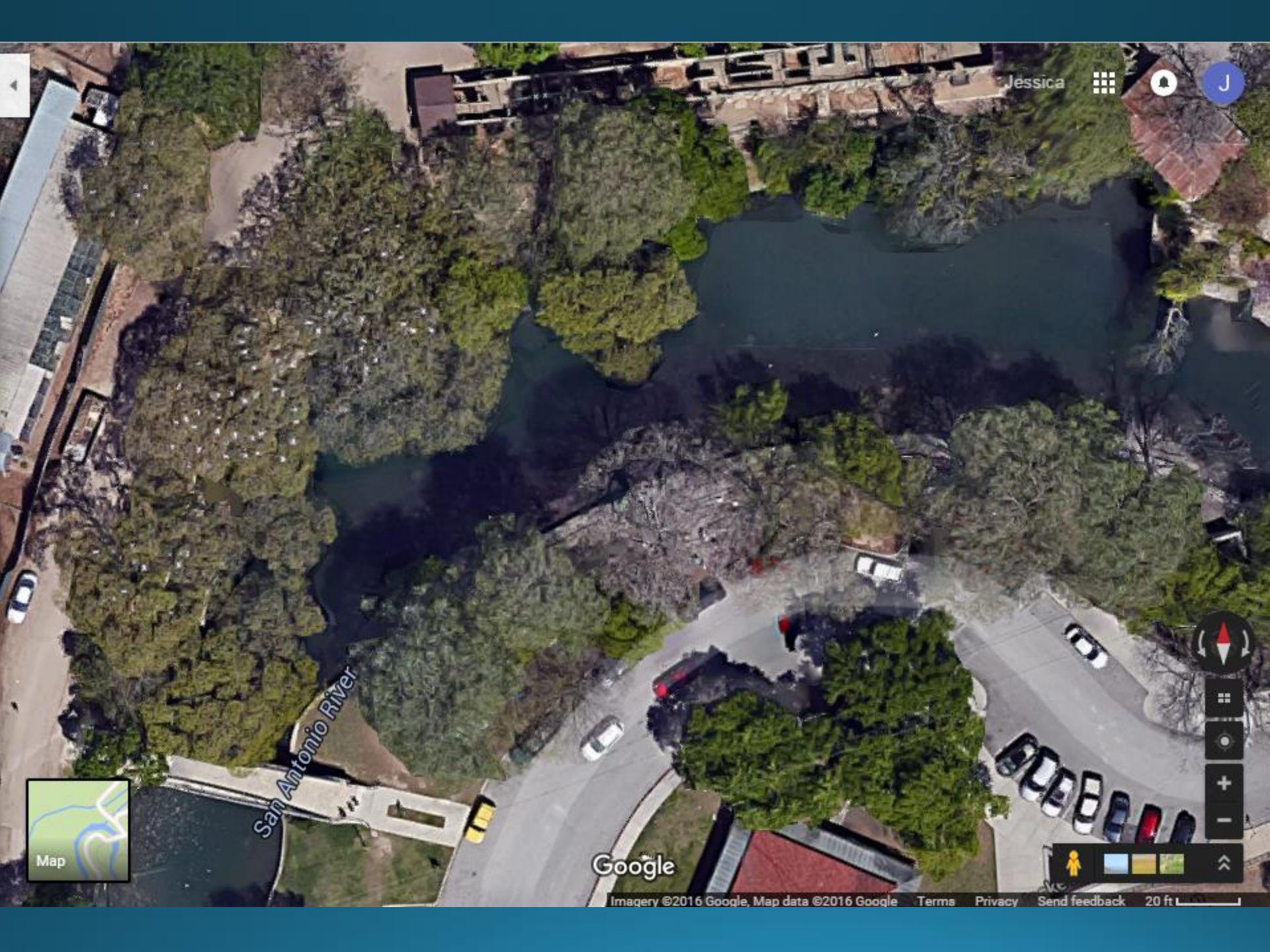
Joske Pavilion Trail

Google



Map



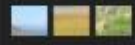


Jessica



San Antonio River

Google





Loud, ground covered in bird droppings, feathers, dead birds, prey remnants and many live birds on the ground



Nuisance Concerns


- Noise
- Odor
- Potential health hazards
- Property damage
- Destruction of vegetation



Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918

- **1918 implemented the 1916 convention between the United States and Canada**
- **Similar conventions between the United States and Mexico (1936), Japan (1972) and Russia (1976)**
- **Established Federal responsibilities for the protection of nearly all species of birds, their eggs and nests.**
- **Violations can result in fines and jail time**

What can and cannot legally be done to these birds?

- 
- **It is prohibited to kill adult birds or harass them in a way that causes the abandonment or death of eggs or hatchlings.**
 - **It is legal to harass the birds as long as there are no active nests**

**Once the FIRST bird lays an egg,
ALL harassment and scare tactics
MUST STOP!**



End of Nesting Season Nest Removal

- **Nest destruction may resume at the end of the nesting season without a permit**
 - **All nesting activities by all birds in the colony have ceased**
- **Infertile/abandoned/dead eggs or long-dead nestlings may also be destroyed without permit**

Permits

- **Salvage:** Collect carcasses, restrictions on disposal, must keep log
- **Incidental Take:** Covers unintentional death, abandonment, or carcass collection such as running a street sweeper or removing a tree with an active nest
- **Depredation:** Limited take (~25-50 birds) but must fall within State's quota (200 in 2011)
 - City can carry out lethal removal 'pre-egg'
 - USDA Wildlife Services carries out collection once active
 - Important to have, but hopefully not necessary

Prevention of Nuisance Rookery Development

- **Early Detection**
 - Determent should focus on *sentry* birds- those first to arrive as scouts for the rest of the flock
- **Public Awareness**
 - Public education increases likelihood of early detection



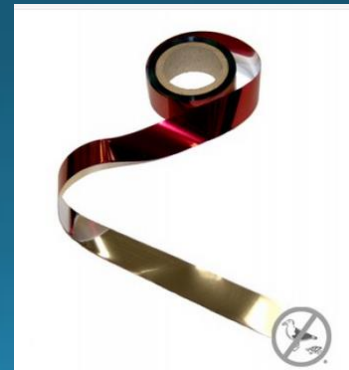
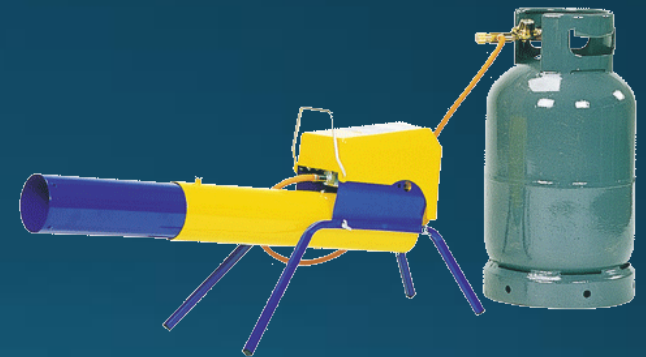
Scare Tactics

- **Noise Deterrents**

- Predator calls
- Pyrotechnics (screamers, bangers)
- Cracker shells (shot from a 12-gauge shotgun)
- Rope-firecrackers
- Propane cannons

- **Visual Deterrents**

- Mylar tape
- Scare Eye balloons



**Nests can be knocked from trees
as long as there are no eggs in the
colony.**





Combination of techniques through June is most effective

Habitat Modification



Thin tree canopies

Birds prefer >75% canopy closure



Modifications of potential nesting areas usually produces longer lasting prevention.

Summary

- **Early detection imperative**
- **Everything hinges on first egg laid**
- **Not a one-time fix**
- **Hard work now may result in years of reduced conflict**

Questions?



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